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Letter dated 13 December 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on 12 December 2004 concerning the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ahmed Tahir **Baduri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 December 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Press release issued on 12 December 2004 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Four years have elapsed since Eritrea and Ethiopia signed the Comprehensive Algiers Peace Agreement on 12 December 2000. The Algiers Peace Agreement was signed after lengthy negotiations that were punctuated by successive Ethiopian military offensives which claimed thousands of lives.

On the basis of the Algiers Agreement, the United Nations deployed a peace-keeping force, UNMEE, at an annual cost of 200 million US$. Similarly, a neutral Boundary Commission was established in January 2001 "to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on pertinent colonial treaties (1900,1902 and 1908) and applicable international law".

The Boundary Commission announced its verdict on 13 April 2002 after examining the voluminous memorials and counter memorials submitted by the Parties as well as a two-week Hearing. The Boundary Commission further issued detailed Demarcation Directions and undertook necessary groundwork to start physical demarcation of the Boundary. This work would have been completed in November 2003 had Ethiopia honoured its treaty obligations and cooperated with the Boundary Commission in accordance with the explicit provisions of the Algiers Agreement. The UN peacekeeping mission would have winded up last year, saving considerable cost to the international community and ushering a period of peace and stability to our region. More importantly, the humanitarian plight of 60,000 of our citizens who remain dislocated from their home villages and towns; the opportunity cost to the peoples of Eritrea and Ethiopia and the clouds of another unnecessary and unjustifiable confrontation would have been removed. As we have maintained all along, the blame for this state of affairs does not rest with Ethiopia alone. Our partners in peace have treaty and moral obligations to persuade Ethiopia to uphold the rule of law and abide by its treaty obligations to promote peace and stability in our region.

The Government of Eritrea thus underlines, at this propitious juncture, that the way forward lies in Ethiopia's:

- Full and unconditional respect of the Algiers Agreements;
- Strict compliance with the Boundary Commission decision of April 13, 2002;
- Withdrawal of its forces from sovereign Eritrean territories; and,
- Cooperation with the Boundary Commission to ensure expeditious demarcation of the Boundary.

The Government of Eritrea urges the international community to help secure peace and stability in our region by putting pressure on Ethiopia to ensure the long over-due demarcation of the boundary.